

MANAGE MY EMOTIONS: RELAXATION

Use this cheat sheet to practice relaxation techniques.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

- ☐ This method progresses through the body tensing and relaxing each muscle group. It can lead to
 - Reduced muscle tension and,
 - Greater awareness of when a muscle group is tense or relaxed

HOW TO PRACTICE ABDOMINAL BREATHING

- ☐ Close your eyes and move into a comfortable seated or reclined position
- ☐ Begin using abdominal breathing
- ☐ Inhale while pressing your toes downward as if stepping on a gas pedal
- ☐ Exhale while releasing tension on your feet
- ☐ Repeat steps 3 and 4 three to five times
- ☐ Repeat steps 3 through 5, tensing and releasing the following body parts:
 - Pull your toes upwards (flexing the foot toward your head)
 - Press the heels away from your body (you should feel a stretch in the calf muscle)
 - Tense your thighs
 - Tighten your stomach
 - Clench your chest (It may help to curl your arms in front of your belly like flexing your muscles)
 - Make a fist and curl your hand inward
 - Extend your fingers and open your hand backward (like making a stop sign)
 - Tighten your biceps (bend arm at the elbow)
 - Shrug shoulders
 - Clench face muscles (jaw, cheeks, forehead, scalp)
- ☐ While doing this, pay particular attention to the difference between a muscle feeling tense versus relaxed so that you can recognize these sensations easily
- ☐ Relax here for a few minutes before opening your eyes

TROUBLESHOOTING

- ☐ After this exercise, you may feel “heavy” as this practice fatigues each muscle group, forcing the muscle to let go of any stress it was carrying.

